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Letter dated 27 June 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

It is our honour to inform you that on 23 April 2018, the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations, in their capacity as co-Chairs of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-hosted a high-level round table on security sector reform (SSR) and sustaining peace, with the support of the Security Sector Reform Unit in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

The round table gathered over 70 participants, as well as representatives of multilateral organizations, including the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Bank and representatives from non-governmental organizations and academia.

It is our pleasure to present to you the attached statement by the co-chairs of the high-level round table (see annex I), which summarizes the key topics discussed during the event and highlights the recommendations that emerged from the deliberations. Further, we present the report of the high-level round table (see annex II). We should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annexes as documents of the General Assembly under agenda item 34 (a) and of the Security Council.

Also, please allow us to express our sincere gratitude and commend the dedicated work of the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, co-chaired by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP. The United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform remains committed to supporting the United Nations in enhancing its roles and approaches to SSR support processes.

(*Signed*) Michal **Mlynár**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Slovakia

(*Signed*) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of South Africa

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Annex I to the letter dated 27 June 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Co-chairs statement

High-level round table on security sector reform and sustaining peace co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations

23 April 2018

Background

1. The high-level round table on security sector reform (SSR) and sustaining peace took place on 23 April 2018 in New York, on the eve of the high-level meeting on "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace", held on 24 and 25 April 2018. The round table confirmed the contribution of SSR to the sustaining peace agenda by highlighting lessons from national SSR experiences and recognizing the significance of partnerships and adequate funding for SSR.

2. The Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations, co-chairs of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-hosted the round table with the support of the Security Sector Reform Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

3. The round table was opened by Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly; Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General; and Xanana Gusmão, former President of Timor-Leste. The round table benefitted from the participation of Faustin-Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic; Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Belgium; Marie-Noëlle Koyara, Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic; Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; Ibrahima Diallo, Commissioner for Security Sector Reform of Mali; Momodou Badjie, National Security Adviser, and Major General Yakuba Drammeh of the Gambia; Sergio Londoño Zurek, Director General of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia; René van Nes, Deputy Head of Division of Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilization and Mediation at the European External Action Service; Barrie Freeman, Deputy and Political Director at the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office; Alexandre Marc, Chief Technical Specialist, Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group at the World Bank; Rüdiger König, Director-General for Humanitarian Assistance, Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation and Post-Conflict Reconstruction at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany; and Paul Picard, Deputy Director for Operations Service of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Conflict Prevention Centre. Panels were facilitated by Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support at UNDP. In addition to the panellists and speakers

from the floor, representatives from 44 Member States[1] attended the event, as well as representatives from across the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.[2]

4. In their statements, participants affirmed without a doubt that SSR is an essential element in the quest for political solutions to conflict, the prevention of conflict or relapse into violence, and the laying of a foundation for the rule of law and democratic governance. As reflected in Security Council resolution 2151 (2014), "an effective, professional and accountable security sector without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law is the cornerstone of peace and sustainable development and is important for conflict prevention". In addition, as noted in the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform (A/67/970–S/2013/480), "effective governance and oversight of the security sector to mitigate its politicization or instrumentalization can be vital to conflict prevention".

Focused seminars highlight security sector reform challenges in advance of the high-level round table

5. In 2017, the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform hosted two events that highlighted a number of important challenges to SSR, namely: the high-level dialogue on global experiences in SSR in New York, held on 11 and 12 May 2017, with a focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace on the African continent; and the "High-level Conference on the Role of Security Sector Reform in Sustaining Peace: Challenges and Opportunities", hosted by Slovakia, in Bratislava, on 5 and 6 June 2017, focused on the sustaining peace agenda as an approach to preventing the outbreak, continuation and recurrence of conflict and which required collective efforts across the entire peace continuum.

6. Subsequently, on 21 February 2018, the Permanent Missions of Belgium and Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations co-hosted the high-level seminar on SSR in West Africa, on the theme "Learning Lessons towards Sustaining Peace", focused on the importance of the SSR agenda across the entire peace and conflict spectrum, with emphasis on the United Nations role in coordination and the importance of national leadership, gender and inclusivity, representative and trusted security services, and adequate financing for SSR.

7. Most recently, on 1 March 2018, the Permanent Missions of Germany and Ethiopia to the United Nations co-hosted a policy discussion on SSR in South Sudan, during which participants noted the need for continued international engagement on SSR to shape peaceful settlements to conflict, as windows of opportunity are often quite narrow, as well as financially sustainable SSR processes and donor coordination.

Observations and recommendations emerging from the round table

8. In his opening remarks, the President of the General Assembly emphasized the role that security actors can play in maintaining stability, building trust between the state and communities, and protecting people from violence, if they are effective, accountable, professional and properly governed. The President also noted the efficacy of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, an approach,

[1] Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, China, Czechia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Iceland, India, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, Malaysia, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Philippines, Romania, Qatar, Singapore, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zambia.

[2] International Peace Institute, United States Institute of Peace, NGO Committee on Sustainable Development and Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria).

co-chaired by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP, to ensuring that reform efforts are coherent and focused on sustaining peace on the ground. In her remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General underlined the important role of SSR in peace processes, stabilization, transitions and prevention of conflict contexts across the entire peace continuum and as part of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. She called for people-centred SSR that has significance in the lives of individuals, together with the need for enhanced governance, financing, expertise and assessments for the security sector. Mr. Gusmão emphasized that security is the most fundamental service provided by a state to its people, and a primary pillar of the social contract. He noted the importance of reconciliation; the centrality of national ownership to ensure that all citizens are agents of peace and development efforts; and the need for resources in support of nationally determined SSR priorities and processes.

9. The round table's first panel discussed national ownership and leadership on SSR and the importance of national policy and governance frameworks, as well as the inclusion of women and representation of diverse sectors of society in SSR processes from the outset. The Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, SSR components in peacekeeping, special political missions and non-mission settings, and the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force have considerable experience supporting nationally led SSR processes, including in relation to Sustainable Development Goal 16. The round table panellists and speakers at preparatory events identified the following key observations and recommendations:

(a) **Parties to conflict should reflect their commitments to SSR in peace processes and agreements**. SSR provisions and terms of reference should be embedded where possible and appropriate in peace accords and new political architectures as early as possible, with dedicated, nationally led implementation and monitoring mechanisms established so as to monitor the impact of SSR on national policies, strategies and democratic governance. In South Sudan, the absorption of armed groups into the security sector without sufficient commitment to the 2005 peace agreement or resolution of ongoing divisions among the parties contributed to a relapse into conflict. The security sector split along political fault lines and continues to divide in accordance with ethnicity, regional interests and local security and economic allegiances. In Colombia, the Government felt it was inappropriate to discuss defence sector reforms within the framework of the peace talks with the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común, but the 2016 Agreement on the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and the Cessation of Hostilities and the Laying down of Arms does contain important commitments relative to security, including a commitment to form the National Commission on Security Guarantees, a special investigation unit to dismantle organized criminal networks, a comprehensive protection plan for former combatants and a comprehensive approach to truth, justice, reparation and measures to prevent the repetition of serious crimes. In Côte d'Ivoire, the SSR process fostered the commitment of former armed groups to a unified Ivorian State, including through the integration of approximately 9,000 former combatants into the security forces. In Mali, the defence and security provisions of the 2015 peace agreement stipulate the principles of inclusivity and substantial representation in the security sector, progressive redeployment, fundamental reforms and the establishment of the National Council on Security Sector Reform. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) SSR supports the implementation of these provisions, which allude to the sensitive political issue of armed group representation in the security sector and the criteria for their integration. It will be important to reflect commitments to an inclusive and accountable defence sector and internal security forces within the African Union-led African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

(b) **National political efforts to consolidate peace and prevent relapse into violence should determine the parameters for United Nations SSR mandates in peacekeeping and special political missions.** In Côte d'Ivoire, the SSR component of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) coordinated international support to the nationally led SSR process, with a particular focus on supporting the development and implementation of the national SSR strategy. Support for a national inclusive dialogue platform around SSR and human security constituted a neutral, voluntary and inclusive mechanism to sustain peace and improve confidence, ownership and transparency with respect to SSR, fostering public accountability for security policy that complements formal democratic oversight functions. In Mali, the MINUSMA SSR team helps national institutions to implement the SSR measures of the peace agreement, including the strengthening of: the National Council on Security Sector Reform, which oversees the formulation of a new national security vision and strategy; the Integration Commission, which is responsible for designing criteria and quotas for the integration of former combatants; and the High Commissioner for Security Sector Reform. The Government of Mali intends to pursue development and SSR in tandem, while grappling with the challenges of integration, coordination of international SSR assistance and defining a national vision for the security sector. In Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) supported the Government in the revision of the 2008 national security strategy, advised on enhancing the professionalization and accountability mechanisms for the security sector and coordinated international assistance for SSR, including the transfer of security responsibilities to the Government.

(c) **As part of United Nations support to national ownership, the composition of the security sector should reflect the social, ethnic and geographic diversity of the country, and all members of society should be equally served, including women and children.** Inclusion can be facilitated through exchange and consultation mechanisms, joints seminars and trainings, as appropriate. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA supported the National Reconciliation Committee on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and SSR in developing the national SSR strategy in 2017. The former lays out a comprehensive approach to the construction of effective, accountable and ethnically and geographically representative security institutions capable of protecting the entire population as well as state institutions. The latter describes a gradual process of standing down of 14 major armed groups from across the country, some elements of which would integrate into the national uniformed services. The pilot disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme of the second half of 2017 supported 439 elements from armed groups, which represented a wide array of communities from geographically diverse areas and integrated 240 into the armed forces. In Mali, the institutional framework for SSR is broad and highly inclusive of all parties to the 2015 peace agreement. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire requested UNOCI to facilitate military interactive sessions to build trust and cohesion among existing members of the armed forces and newly integrated ex-combatants and to discuss the army-nation concept, gender and human rights. Women and youth associations were also invited to participate. The Government continued the sessions after six months of UNOCI support. UNOCI also supported local security governance, both by sensitizing local populations to the national SSR strategy and by facilitating the establishment of local security committees comprising regional officials and local security institutions, which assist in early warning and link the capital with localities, in line with the strategy.

(d) **Confidence-building measures can build trust between citizens and professional, accountable security providers.** In contexts in which the security sector has committed human rights violations, SSR processes emphasize the importance of restoring popular trust in reformed security forces. Transitional justice,

clear criteria for entry into the reformed security services and the tangible provision of security for the population can, when provided at the appropriate times, foster reconciliation and contribute to a new social contract. SSR support can be catalytic to other peace processes, especially in settings in which it has been requested by national authorities. In the Gambia, following the political transition in 2017, the Government undertook a series of civilian-military engagements and surveys to build citizens' confidence in the armed forces and internal security services, demilitarize rule of law institutions and promote the role of the police. The United Nations has supported a security sector assessment, a national security advisor and a technical SSR working group comprising members of the Government and civil society. In Timor-Leste, following a breakdown in security governance and oversight in 2006 and 2008, and subsequent conflict between the military and the police, the Government faced pressures to prioritize stability over individual accountability for past violations. However, together with national reconciliations efforts, a package of laws passed by the Government in 2011 on internal security, national defence and national security did succeed in enhancing parliamentary oversight of the security sector. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI support to confidence-building measures provided an underpinning to the establishment of inclusive regional security councils, deepening the territorial dimension of the national SSR process and improving local security governance.

(e) **United Nations coordination of support for nationally led SSR efforts should seek to ensure continuous support as peacekeeping or special political missions draw down**. The full assumption by national authorities in post-conflict settings of security and SSR tasks requires careful planning and ongoing international support. Both national political and economic commitment and dedicated resource mobilization are critical to sustain progress. In Liberia, the Justice and Security Joint Programme 2016–2019 between the Government, UNMIL and UNDP was designed to ensure seamless support for SSR during the Mission's drawdown. During the mission transition in Côte d'Ivoire, sustained UNOCI coordination of international assistance to the national SSR process with partners and the United Nations country team enabled the formulation of a nationally owned programme document to gather international technical and financial assistance to SSR priorities and promote the sustainability of critical initiatives.

10. Participants on the panel on partnerships and financing for SSR noted the role of regional, subregional and bilateral partnerships in supporting nationally owned SSR processes and called for United Nations coordination of these complex and sensitive processes. Nearly all participants underlined the importance of coordination at both the national and international levels. Participants also noted the role of the international financial institutions in SSR and observed that security and justice public expenditure reviews are valuable analytical and planning tools, and more specifically:

(a) **The United Nations plays a significant role in the coordination of international support to SSR, and there is a need to develop enhanced capacity and methodologies for this coordination with other international partners**. Coordination of SSR support among international actors is key to avoiding overlap and duplication of activities, enhancing coherence and efficiency, ensuring sustained approaches through the nexus of peacekeeping and development through a sector-wide response and reconciling the diverse agendas of multilateral and bilateral actors. Joint planning should be undertaken wherever feasible, including in such settings that involve sustaining peace as the Gambia and Burkina Faso.

(b) **There is a need to enhance the effectiveness and predictability of international support to SSR, including by ensuring greater clarity of roles between the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and OSCE**.

The July 2017 joint support plan on SSR and the rule of law in the Central African Republic agreed between MINUSCA, the European Union delegation and the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic offers a strong example of the potential of institutionalized cooperation agreements on SSR support. MINUSCA and the Training Mission worked jointly with the Government to develop the national defence plan, the military programming law and operational plans for the deployment of the Central African armed forces in joint operations with MINSUCA. The Security Council can play an important role through the provision of strong SSR coordination mandates for peace operations. In the light of resource limitations, there is a need for international commitment to ensuring that well-planned, longer-term and sustainable investments are made in SSR through a sector-wide approach.

(c) **The international community should commit to enhancing transparency of bilateral and multilateral security sector assistance, including in financing for SSR through official development assistance and other support**. Participants noted that, at the country level, all security sector assistance and funding should be tracked to facilitate transparency and foster national and international commitment to building governance and oversight structures to ensure sustained reforms. This would facilitate coordination and contribute to building security sectors which can be maintained by national governments.

(d) **International support for the reform of the defence and internal security forces as part of a credible, nationally led peace process can help ensure that national resources are available for social and economic development in addition to the extension of state authority across the country**. Colombia attributes the bilateral assistance provided for the strengthening of the national armed forces with ensuring the Government's ability to direct resources to development, the restoration of state presence and services to rural areas and the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.

11. The round table also highlighted the utility of country-specific meetings of the Group of Friends, including on countries transitioning from peacekeeping to sustaining peace and development contexts. The co-chairs of the Group of Friends have resolved to hold such meetings as appropriate going forward.

Annex II to the letter dated 27 June 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the High-level round table on security sector reform and sustaining peace[1]

Co-hosted by Slovakia and South Africa on behalf of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform on the eve of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

New York, 23 April 2018

1. The high-level round table on security sector reform (SSR) and sustaining peace was held on 23 April 2018, in New York, at United Nations Headquarters. The event was co-hosted by the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa on behalf of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform on the eve of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, and with the support of the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. The event brought together a significant number of high-level participants to discuss two important issues: learning from nationally owned SSR experiences and enhancing partnerships and funding for SSR support. The present report provides a summary of the key issues discussed.

2. Opening statements were delivered by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Miroslav Lajčák; the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed; and former President of Timor-Leste and eminent person of the Group of Seven Plus, Kaya Rala Xanana Gusmão. This opening panel underlined that SSR is expected to play a key role in the successful implementation of both the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas. As highlighted by the President of the Assembly, security actors can "hold the tools which can pull societies back from the brink of conflict — or push them over the edge". Hence, it was recognized that SSR is essential to ensuring that the role of security actors is positive, in terms of maintaining stability during periods of tension and protecting people from violence. If security services are to support sustaining peace, reforms should focus on improving their governance, in particular their effectiveness, accountability and professionalism, as crucial elements for success.

3. Still, while acknowledging the progress made by the United Nations — including by the adoption of Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) on SSR — as well as by other international partners, it was recognized that critical challenges remain in the provision of effective support to national SSR processes. In this context, it was emphasized that SSR should not be regarded as a stand-alone activity but rather as part of a wider strategy to sustain peace and prevent violent conflict, which must consider other issues, including access to basic services such as education and health care. In this spirit, it was highlighted that SSR is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, in Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies and effective, accountable and transparent institutions. The Deputy Secretary-General

[1] This report was prepared in cooperation with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

stated that "at its heart, SSR is about ensuring safety and enabling women, men and children to live their lives free from fear".

4. Moreover, it was underlined that enhanced efforts are needed to address reforms of the security sector not only in conflict-affected regions, but also in contexts in which peace is fragile. As noted by Mr. Xanana Gusmão, sustaining peace cannot be a time-bound project; it requires addressing the root causes of problems. Furthermore, solutions must be grounded in the national contexts themselves. A one-size-fits-all approach to SSR will simply be unsustainable.

Learning from nationally owned security sector reform experiences

5. SSR remains a challenging endeavour that relies on the need for national leadership and national ownership. In this context, the first thematic panel was focused on "Learning from nationally-owned SSR experiences" and was moderated by Alexander Zuev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions at the Department of Peacekeeeping Operations. The panel aimed to share national experiences from mission and non-mission contexts and further explore challenges and opportunities related to operationalizing the concept of national ownership and other principles set out in Security Council resolution 2151 (2014). The panel was composed of: Marie-Noëlle Koyara, Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic; Ibrahima Diallo, Commissioner for Security Sector Reform of Mali; Momodou Badjie, National Security Adviser of the Gambia; Yakuba Drammeh, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff of the Gambia; and Sergio Londoño Zurek, Director General of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia and acting mayor of the city of Cartagena. In addition, political statements were made from the floor, including by ministerial representatives of Belgium and Germany.

6. It was noted that national ownership is the cornerstone of any sustainable SSR process. However, concerns were raised that international actors at times undermine this ownership by their insufficient engagement in context-specific approaches that take into account the capacities and potential of each country. Different strategies were proposed to operationalize national ownership.

7. First, national experiences have shown that national ownership hinges on the capacity to build the trust and confidence of a population in the security services. The National Security Adviser and Deputy Chief of Defence Staff of the Gambia stated that SSR has been instrumental in overcoming the country's recent crisis and improving the trust of citizens in security actors. To that end, citizens have been actively engaged in an assessment of the security sector implemented by the Government alongside international actors, in particular the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the United Nations. Consultations were carried out with all parts of society in the Gambia to foster national ownership and support planning for reforms that can enable the development of people-oriented institutions.

8. Secondly, and in relation to the first strategy, it was emphasized that the principle of inclusivity must be at the centre of any SSR strategy and understood as a core element of trust-building among the population. In this respect, national ownership was recognized to encompass local ownership and ensuring that no one is left behind — not only in terms of the composition of the security services, but also in terms of who they serve. In Mali, for instance, the peace agreement specifically stipulates the principles of inclusivity and substantial representation in the security sector. Consequently, and as explained by the Malian Commissioner for Security Sector Reform, the national institutional framework for SSR is highly inclusive of different stakeholders. For example, a workshop held to develop a national strategy on SSR included representatives of civil society. In addition, efforts have been made

to integrate both the gender and age dimensions into the participatory processes in Mali, where it was underscored that women and youth must be involved, not only in the consultation process, but also in political decision-making. Similarly, the Minister of Defence of the Central African Republic explained that their 2017 national SSR strategy lays out a comprehensive approach to the construction of effective, accountable and ethnically and geographically representative security sector institutions capable of protecting the entire population. The President of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadera, who also joined the round table, pledged to continue to move the SSR process in his country in this direction.

9. Thirdly, a sustained and holistic approach to peacebuilding was also viewed as critical to national ownership. Colombia is an important example of peace achieved after years of institutional capacity-building and of prioritizing peace on the development agenda. As underlined by the Director General of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia, peacebuilding efforts have required the investment of significant resources in strengthening the judiciary, promoting human rights and improving the governance mechanisms of the security services. It was noted that a number of measures required to implement the peace agreement were related to SSR, including, for instance, the establishment of a special investigative unit. However, while SSR was a cornerstone of the process, efforts to reform security institutions were implemented in parallel with other programmes, including education and economic initiatives.

10. Finally, it was acknowledged that without ongoing national dialogue, reform processes can lead to counterproductive results, given that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. In this regard, the United Nations and other partners engaged in a country should always first invest in promoting consensus-building and reconciliation initiatives among national stakeholders, as the baseline for any peacebuilding effort, including SSR. While recognizing that there will always be different needs to be accommodated in any given context, without national reconciliation efforts, there is no room to successfully build on national ownership.

Enhancing partnership and funding for security sector reform support

11. The second thematic panel was focused on "Enhancing partnerships and funding for SSR support" and was moderated by Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of its Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. The panel aimed to foster discussion on concrete steps that could be taken to strengthen partnerships for SSR support and, within this context, to enhance predictable and sustained financing for SSR support. The panel was composed of Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; René Van Nes, Deputy Head of the Division for the Prevention of Conflicts, Rule of Law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilization and Mediation at the European External Action Service of the European Union; Barrie Freeman, Deputy Head and Political Director of the Peacebuilding Support Office; and Alexandre Marc, Chief Technical Specialist, Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group at the World Bank. In addition, several representatives of multilateral organizations and the donor community took the floor, including from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Norway.

12. The panel underscored that all key areas of peacebuilding, including SSR, require effective partnerships and sustainable financing. Otherwise, the vision of future peace is unlikely to materialize and may generate frustration. In terms of partnerships, many examples of cooperation and coordination exist between and among different partners. For instance, the African Union-United Nations-European Union capacity-building programme provides an excellent example of how a cooperation framework can encourage joint endeavours. The recently published

United Nations-World Bank report entitled "Pathways for Peace" was also noted for its forward-looking approach and for planting the seeds for developing a common understanding on conflict prevention. In the field, there have also been some initiatives to better leverage resources and expertise. For instance, in the Central African Republic, coordination took place in support of a division of labour, with bilateral actors providing equipment while multilateral partners focused on the provision of training and governance-related support.

13. Additionally, some efforts have been made to strengthen coherence within organizations themselves. For instance, in the United Nations, ongoing reforms led by the current Secretary-General are expected to strengthen links across the Organization's three pillars and at all stages of conflict, throughout which SSR efforts should be taking place. Further, the United Nations global focal point for police, justice and corrections was recognized as a good example of how joint operational support can be provided in these component-specific areas. The Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform was also commended for its contribution to advancing important discussions intended to develop a more coherent approach within and beyond the United Nations.

14. However, while good practices and initiatives exist, it was underlined that there is room for further improvement. In particular, more must be done to institutionalize cooperation across multilateral organizations and to clarify roles and responsibilities among them. Indeed, the success of support to national SSR processes hinges on the capacity of international and regional organizations to deliver in a coherent and coordinated manner in line with national priorities. As such, the mapping study entitled "Supporting nationally led security sector reform: mapping the approaches of multilateral organizations", conducted by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces at the request of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and in cooperation with the African Union, the European Union and OSCE, was commended by several representatives of those organizations for taking a step towards identifying concrete recommendations based on empirical evidence on how to strengthen partnerships in support of sustaining peace. It was also announced that, following the expert-level workshop held in Brussels on 13 March 2018 to discuss the findings of the study, talks have begun on how to move forward in implementing some of those recommendations. This includes efforts to improve collaboration on guidance development processes and to identify upcoming opportunities to deploy joint assessment missions on SSR. It was also highlighted that the organizations must strive towards joint or at least coordinated dialogue with national counterparts and on the basis of shared analysis rather than individual engagement. It was acknowledged that such collaborative efforts should start at the early planning stages and that fruitful partnerships depend on the political will to build participatory relationships based on mutual trust.

15. Partnerships must also reflect the need to further leverage available resources to address realities on the ground and to enable the implementation of mandates. Sustainable and predictable funding is required to facilitate the comprehensive approach needed to provide support to SSR from an institution-building perspective. Yet, funding is often a main challenge, as most countries engaged in reform processes are emerging from conflict and have very fragile economies, lacking the necessary resources to undertake reforms. It was therefore recommended that peace agreements include the economic implications of the terms agreed to, including those related to SSR goals. At the same time, international support to financing was recognized as essential. While SSR is not cheap, it was highlighted that it is far cheaper than responding to an outbreak of conflict because a peace was too fragile to last. Strong calls were therefore made for investing in SSR, and in particular, providing more predictable and sustained financing in the area of SSR.

16. With these concerns in mind, there was a call to foster international commitment to enhance the transparency of bilateral and multilateral assistance to the security sector, including through broader development assistance. The cost of SSR processes must be transparent, efficient, and effective. It is expected that current reforms led by the Secretary-General will reduce fragmentation and improve coherence regarding the management and use of financial resources within the United Nations. In addition, panellists called for efforts to further exploit the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission to serve as a platform to convene all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, including Member States; national authorities; United Nations missions and country teams; international, regional and subregional organizations; international financial institutions; civil society; women's groups; youth organizations; and, where relevant, the private sector and national human rights institutions, in order to ensure predictable financing for peacebuilding.

Conclusion and way forward

17. Concluding remarks were delivered by Thomas Guerber, Director of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, and Vasu Gounden, Executive Director and founder of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes. It was underlined that the round table reaffirmed SSR as a core element of the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas. Nonetheless, the litmus test for ensuring an effective contribution to those agendas will be whether the many opportunities identified at the round table can be successfully implemented in practice. In particular, the following key priorities were highlighted at the meeting as essential to enable SSR to contribute effectively to the sustaining peace agenda:

(a) National ownership: promote the principle of inclusivity and strengthen the trust of people in security services as a core element of enabling national leadership and ownership. This requires more efforts from international actors to adapt support to local contexts and help build national capacities in areas that can empower national authorities to lead and manage reforms.

(b) Partnerships: increase efforts to institutionalize cooperation across multilateral organizations and to clarify roles and responsibilities among them. This would enable more coordinated dialogue with national counterparts, on the basis of shared analysis as opposed to individual engagement. The implementation of recommendations in the mapping study on the approaches of multilateral organizations to SSR was identified as an important first step in this direction.

(c) Financing: ensure that the United Nations system, Member States and other partners have the necessary tools, capacities and political support to advance nationally led efforts as a core element of sustaining peace across the peace continuum. This includes investing financial resources in SSR support to ensure sustainable approaches to long-term reform efforts and fostering commitment to enhance the transparency of international assistance to the security sector.